
PROJECT TITLE: Early Stage Cluster Development Capacity Building Funding
PROPOSAL DUE: 5pm Monday, April 3, Pacific Time, Olympia, WA

Submit all questions to the RFP Coordinator at
Esther.Nielsen@commerce.wa.gov. Commerce will post answers periodically
through 03/29/23. Questions must be submitted by 03/24/23.

- 1) **Q:** Our region already has a regional technology alliance that represents member businesses in the area and we are aligned closely with Innovation Hub work on the Oregon side of our region. Would this technology alliance be qualified to apply for Cohort 1 dollars to augment administration and work we already have under way so that we can focus these efforts onto the Washington side of our region as well?
- A:** You may include Ecosystem Team partners from out of state.
- 2) **Q:** Our partners are from communities across Washington State. Are we eligible for Cohort 1 if we want to work across WA State or do we need to pick certain jurisdictions / geographies to focus on?
- A:** Proposers may include partners outside of their communities and/or counties, however Core Team and initial Ecosystem Team should show strong leadership and involvement by organizations and individuals located in:
- 1) a rural county or counties
 - 2) a Persistent Poverty Community
 - 3) Historically underserved, disadvantaged or marginalized communities or groups.
- 3) **Q:** Are nonprofits eligible to apply?
- A:** Yes
- 4) **Q:** While working with 2023 ICAP launch projects will COM simultaneously maintain a public participation lasik (rolling invitations) so to proactively endeavor a clusters preparation for the 10-year scope?
- A:** Commerce is working to build a long-term cluster development program and the Launch program is a component of our work to build an applicant pipeline. At this time, Launch is a pilot program with no additional funding beyond the current EDA Planning Grant.

5) **Q: When you say rural /persistent poverty, is that rural AND persistent poverty? or is it rural OR persistent poverty?**

A: A proposer that is located both in a rural county and a persistent poverty community will receive points for both.

6) **Q: Would Pierce County qualify as the initial market for [applying] (although most production is expected to be exported out-of-county)?**

A: Please review the criteria for Cohort 1 in Section 1.2.1.1 of the RFP and the links for each point to see if your organization and area of focus meets the criteria. Also review the scoring matrix in Section 4 of the RFP and review your answers accordingly. Organizations are encouraged to consider applying for Cohort 2 if they do not meet the criteria listed in 1.2.1.1. See <http://www.icapwashington.org/icap-launch> for more information about Cohort 2.

7) **Q: Do we need the local EDB support (the EDB does not have a primary focus on this niche market)?**

A: Commerce is not requiring a letter of support from Associate Development Organizations (ADOs)/Economic Development Boards (EDBs) for this stage. These organizations are encouraged to participate as a Core Team or Ecosystem Team partner or to lead an application as applicable.

8) **Q: Could tribal enterprises count as industry members?**

A: Yes

9) **Q: Do we need to have our team leader identified?**

A: Please identify the team leader if possible. If they will be a new hire or a subcontractor, please identify as such. Refer to the Note in Section 2.7 of the RFP for details on identification of subcontractors in proposals.

Note: This procurement will be supported by funding awarded by the federal government. Consequently, the procurement of subcontractors must be compliant with federal procurement standards. Therefore, the transaction must be completed as the result of a full and open competition. Proposals submitted in response to this RFP require the disclosure of whether the consultant intends to procure subcontractors. The identification or preselection of any subcontractors is prohibited under federal procurement rules. This requirement must be considered when completing the mandatory Diverse Business Inclusion Plan.

- 10) **Q:** What's more important that an idea or topic that industry is behind something or an idea that hasn't employed someone yet in my region?
- A:** Innovation clusters are typically created to either
- 1) Grow an existing industry
 - 2) Transform a legacy industry or
 - 3) Grow an industry of the future.
- If your community is focused on growing a sector that is not yet a key industry in your community, please ensure that your application clearly outlines the opportunity this industry represents for your community and identify a strong Core Team and initial Ecosystem Team to champion this work.
- 11) **Q:** How big a region of a region can you have?
- A:** Cohort 1 Launch participants will generally be more localized, but you may propose a Core Team and Ecosystem Team with a more regional footprint. You may also develop a more regional approach over the duration of the program.
- 12) **Q:** Can you have multiple applications from same org?
- A:** Yes
- 13) **Q:** If two areas submit for very similar things, will you work with them to combine?
- A:** We are unable to facilitate these connections during the procurement process. We will consider similar applications from different communities.
- 14) **Q:** Can we talk to other communities that are doing similar programs/have similar innovation clusters?
- A:** Feel free to reach out to other potential applicants directly. Once organizations are selected, Commerce will operate Launch as a cohort. Core Teams from the 4 organizations will learn with and from each other. The Innovation Cluster Accelerator team can also facilitate connections to peer innovation clusters at that time.
- 15) **Q:** Can we find out if there are other applicants with similar topics that aren't chosen, that we can talk with?
- A:** You may request information about proposals submitted to Commerce through a Public Records Request <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/media-center/public-records-request/>

- 16) Q: Through this process, do we have to create a new entity to facilitate that or can we use an existing entity?**
- A:** Organizations selected for Launch do not have to create a new entity.
- 17) Q: Will you do this program every year, if you don't get an application in on time?**
- A:** ICAP Launch is a Pilot Program with funding from an ARPA Statewide Planning Grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration. At this time, this program is funded through June 30, 2024.
- 18) Q: What are examples of super clusters that started from nothing?**
- A:** There are over 7000 clusters worldwide. You can visit the resource page on the icapwashington.org/resources website to learn more.

All terms and conditions of this RFP remain in full force and effect